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General

THE ART OF THE NAVAJO

From the Alfred I. Barton Collection

Lowe Art Museum/University of Miami

August 9-November 23, 1975

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Information

MUSEUM HOURS: Monday through Friday, 12 noon to 5 p.m. (Offices open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.); Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
MUSEUM INFORMATION: Telephone: 305-284-3535, write to the Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, 1301 Miller Drive, Coral Gables, Florida 33146.
ADMISSION FREE: Guided tours by volunteer members of the Lowe Art Museum Docent Guild are available. Please call ten days in advance.
MUSEUM ART SALES—RENTALS GALLERY and GIFT SHOP HOURS: Monday through Friday, 12 noon to 4 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Manager, Cindy Rybovich.
EXHIBITIONS: The Beaux Arts, the Friends of Art and Society of the Lowe Art Museum membership fees provide a major portion of the funds necessary to support Lowe Art Museum exhibitions.
MUSEUM STAFF: John J. Baratte, Director; Paul E. Thompson, Assistant Director; Donna Ray, Assistant to the Director; Carol Hotchkiss, Registrar; Zoe DeBlasio, Museum Secretary; Brian Dursum, Assistant Museum Secretary; Melanie Dalton, Membership Secretary and Receptionist; Elliott Stringer, Building Superintendent; Richard Johenning, Installation Engineer; Victor Zamora, Housekeeper; Lonnie Templeton, Electronics Supervisor; Museum Guards: Betty Walker, Chief Guard; Delphine Walker.
CATALOG: Designed and edited by Paul E. Thompson.

Greater Miami Celebrates America's Bicentennial

Preface

The significance of the Lowe's Alfred I. Barton Collection continues to grow. This Collection, and particularly the Southwest Indian textiles, has been well known since its gathering over thirty years ago; but well known among a relatively small group—those particularly interested in the American Indians and their many marvelous products. Only in the past few years has interest increased to the point where an exhibition of Navajo Blankets and Jewelry is eagerly awaited.

Thus the significance of Mr. Barton's foresight: in one place, and far from their origin both in time and place, you can see objects that rank among the finest extant. The definitive exhibition of Navajo blankets, organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1972, included five examples from the Barton Collection and traveled extensively.

This quote from H. P. Mera's book about the Barton Collection, *Southwestern Textiles*, fits today as it did in 1949:

> The scope and character of any given collection tends to reflect...the mental outlook of the collector. Some make selections as whimsy dictates. Some care only for rarities or perhaps are more concerned with quantity, excluding all other considerations. Fortunately, their are others, possessing a more orderly type of mind who strive to bring together material, not only for their own enjoyment, but which may eventually serve the less fortunate as a means of added knowledge and inspiration. An outstanding example coming within this latter category, is the collection of...Mr. Alfred I. Barton.

The Museum's thanks go once again to Mrs. Kathy Vale, a member of the Lowe's Docent Guild, whose high-quality aid in organizing this material under the direction of Museum Registrar Ms. Carol Hotchkiss was important to its successful coherence. Several other Docents helped in preparation and installation, and we also thank them for their continuing assistance.

Paul E. Thompson
Assistant Director

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Called "Apaches de Navajo" by the Spaniards, "Tasámewé" or "Dacábimo" by the Hopi, "Oop" or "Oohp" by the Pima, "The Wild Coyotes" by the Zuni, the Navajo refer to themselves as "The People of the Earth", or the "Diné."

Navajo traditions and culture, sparsely documented before the 17th century, are known today mostly through myth. We do know the Navajo migrated to the American Southwest from Alaska and Canada with the peoples loosely titled "Apache", and that mention of them might have been made as early as 1598. The first use of the term "Navajo", however, was made by Mexican writer Zarate-Salmeron in 1629.

A significant contribution to Navajo culture was the mass importation of sheep by the Spaniards in the early 1600's. Sheep's wool became the primary material for Navajo weaving. The entire process, from the carding of wool through the spinning of thread, preparation of dyes (strictly local in the beginnings, made from both organic and inorganic matter), to the weaving itself, was by hand. One example of the painstaking nature of their craft dates from the 1830's, when the Navajo first encountered "bayeta", or baize, from roving traders. This red flannel cloth was made in England, exported to Spain, shipped to Mexico, and then to Santa Fe by burro train. The cloth, in bolts, was unravelled by the women, respun, then woven into the blankets.

The large, vertical blanket loom used by the Navajo may have been invented in the Southwest, since it has not been found elsewhere. About five feet long, it was made of upright branches at each side and across the top, and weighted by a log at the bottom. The Pueblo Indians introduced weaving to the Navajo, who adopted Pueblo spinning methods. Among the Navajo, only the women became weavers.

Although many variations exist, there are three major design categories. The earliest, or Classic Style, dates from the first part of the 19th century into the 1880's, and used no artificial dyes in its design of three-inch alternating black and white stripes. From this period we also sometimes find red added, in squares, and the blanket corners fringed. In mid-century, a second category, the "chief's blanket", was developed. This style was intended to be worn by men, not only chiefs, and the pattern of weaving remains the same when the blanket is folded into quarters. Women's blankets of this type have narrower stripes. The last stage saw the development of new patterns and brighter colors, beginning with the importation of aniline dyes and commercial yarns about 1865. German traders took saxony yarn to Santa Fe, and the Navajo combined it with their own wool. Also, Germantown (Pennsylvania) yarns became more plentiful.

Toward the end of the century, the pictorial blanket became popular, including pictures of animals, objects, and

symbols as well as the purely geometric designs that had long dominated Navajo weaving. One of the rare Navajo designs is known as the "Spider Woman", and includes the "Spider Woman" opening in the blanket whose significance is probably ceremonial; the Navajo have not explained it, and few examples remain. The "Spider Woman" cross also appears in some blankets.

This Navajo legend says much about the people and their understanding of the unity of nature:

> Spider Woman instructed the Navajo Women how to weave on a loom which Spider Man told them how to make. The crosspoles were made of sky and earth cords, the warp sticks of sun rays, the healds of rock crystal, and sheet lightning. The batten was a sun halo, white shell made the comb. There were four spindles: one a stick of zigzag lightning with a whorl of cannel coal; one a stick of flash lightning with a whorl of turquoise; a third had a stick of sheet lightning with a whorl of abalone; a rain streamer formed the stick of the fourth, and its whorl was white shell.

The Navajo have shown a remarkable ability to adapt to change, and today comprise the largest tribe in this country. Their arts are, in part, a blend of Pueblo techniques, Spanish, Mexican, and Plains Indian designs, European and American materials, and Navajo magic. Harmony and balance are expressed in their strong, quietly symmetrical designs and superior craftsmanship. Their blankets have been highly prized particularly by abstract artists in recent years for their simple yet elegant patterns and because their utilitarian nature—all were made to be worn or used—reflects the fusion of life and art, of tradition and civilization, in a visual medium.

Carol Hotchkiss
Registrar

Warp and weft
Warp: on the Navajo upright loom, the vertical strands of yarn; the weft are the filler yarns, woven horizontally. The warp and weft count listed here are per square inch. Color, dye, and material are listed left to right; unless otherwise indicated, the material is wool. Sizes listed are horizontal then vertical.

Classic Design

1 Circa 1850-70, 54"x84½", 16 warp, 94 weft.

White		*Handspun*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Blue-Green	*Native*	*Handspun*
Red	*Commercial*	*Raveled (2 strands)*

2 Circa 1850-70, 54"x70", 16 warp, 62 weft.

White	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Red		*Raveled (2 strand)*

3 Circa 1850-70, 41"x59", 11 warp, 60 weft.

White	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Black	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Scarlet		*Raveled*
Madder		*Raveled*
Scarlet		*3-ply yarn*
Light Green		*Raveled*

4 Circa 1850-70, 43½"x57", 13 warp, 63 weft.

White	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Pink	*Mixed Red, Raveled & White Carded Together*	
Red		*Raveled*

5 Circa 1850-70, 53"x73", 13 warp, 78 weft.

White		*Handspun*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Mulberry		*Raveled*
Madder		*Raveled*

Chief Style

6 Circa 1850-60, 55"x73", 10 warp, 72 weft.

Black	*Natural & Native*	*Handspun*
White	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Indigo	*Indigo*	*Handspun*

7 Circa 1850-70, 51"x63½", 8 warp, 60 weft.

Black	*Natural*	*Handspun*
White	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Mulberry	*Commercial*	*3-ply*
Green	*Native*	*Handspun*
Yellow	*Native*	*Handspun*

8 Circa 1860-70, 52"x73½", 9 warp, 72 weft.

White	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Black	*Dyed*	*Handspun*
Red		*Raveled*

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9 Circa 1870, 44"x56", 11 warp, 57 weft.

White		*Handspun*
Black	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Pink	*Cochineal*	*3-ply yarn*

10 Woman's Dress, circa 1850-70, 51"x32", 14 warp, 96 weft.

Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Black	*Native*	*Handspun*
Red	*Commercial*	*Raveled*
Green	*Commercial*	*Yarn divided & used in single strands**

**A procedure that requires considerable extra effort by the weaver.*

11 Children's Shawl, circa 1850-70, 30"x51", 13 warp, 128 weft.

White	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Red	*Commercial*	*Raveled*

12 Banded Background, circa 1880's, 47"x67", 7 warp, 32 weft.

Blue, 2 shades	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Black	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Red	*Commercial*	*Handspun*

13 Slave Blanket, circa 1860-80, 54"x78", 8 warp, 32 weft.

White	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Brown	*Commercial*	*Handspun*
Red	*Commerical*	*Handspun*
Crimson	*Commercial*	*Handspun*
Yellow	*Commercial*	*Handspun*

14 Outline Weave, circa 1890, 88"x53", 14 warp, 48 weft.

Red	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
Blue	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
Green	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
Yellow	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
White	*4-ply Germantown yarn*

15 Zoned Design, circa 1870's, 72"x50", 11 warp, 82 weft.

Light Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Red		*Raveled & 3-ply Saxony*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Yellow	*Native*	*Handspun*
Grey	*Natural, Black & White*	*Handspun*

16 Serrated Design, circa 1900, 63"x40", 14 warp, 56 weft.

Pink	*Commercial*	*4-ply*
Red	*Commercial*	*4-ply*
Light Green	*Commercial*	*4-ply*
Dark Green	*Commercial*	*4-ply*
Yellow	*Commercial*	*4-ply*
Orange	*Commercial*	*4-ply*
Black	*Commercial*	*4-ply*

17 Wedge Weave, circa 1880's, 44"x65", 7 warp, 20 weft.

White	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Red	*Commercial*	*Handspun*
Yellow	*Commercial*	*Handspun*
Blue	*Indigo*	*Handspun*
Green	*Commercial*	*Handspun*

Pictorial Blankets

18 Circa 1890, 79"x43", 13 warp, 48 weft.

Red	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
Black	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
Light Blue	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
Dark Blue	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
Light Green	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
Dark Green	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
Yellow	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
Orange	*4-ply Germantown yarn*
White	*4-ply Germantown yarn*

19 Sand Painting, circa 1930-40, 65"x66", 8 warp, 44 weft.

Sand	*Commercial*	*Handspun*
Black	*Commercial*	*Handspun*
Blue	*Commercial*	*Handspun*
White	*Natural*	*Handspun*
Red	*Commercial*	*Handspun*
Yellow		

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The Navajo learned the art of working metal from the Mexicans. Their first raw materials were brass and copper taken from telegraph service cables and other equipment, later supplanted by Mexican silver coins and then by American coins as well as slug and sheet silver. The United States Government later outlawed the latter practice.

Stylistically, the Navajo borrowed not only from the Mexicans but also from the Plains Indians, who were influenced by the Eastern Tribes, and from the Americans and European travelers. For example, many of the designs the Navajo produced in silver were made from the same dies (metal stamping devices) used by the Mexicans in ornamenting leather.

The familiar "squash blossom" necklace was a design borrowed from colonial Mexican costume ornamentation of the 18th century. The blossoms are accompanied by hollow silver beads and are copies of the Mexican pomegranate design. The necklace's central motif, the amulet, shows the influence of other cultures. Traced to the crescent-shaped amulet of the Mediterranean, used to ward off the "evil eye", it was first used by the Navajo as the centerpiece in a horse's bridle before its adaptation to the squash blossom necklace.

"Ketohs" were wrist guards worn by Navajo archers for protection against the snap of the bowstring. Today, this silver guard, attached to a leather wristlet, is worn by Navajo men as a piece of decorative jewelry.

The form of the concha belts may have been inspired by silver hair ornaments worn by the Great Plains Indians, a Navajo enemy. The word "concha" derives from the Spanish word for shell—the shape suggested by the oval silver links which sometimes alternate with butterfly shapes in the belts.

Navajo silverwork shows two principal techniques: repousse and sandcasting. Repousse designs are made by hammering on the reverse side of a flat sheet of the metal, thus creating a raised pattern. Sandcasting, an often-used method, was accomplished by first carving the total shape of the piece, including whatever surface design it was to have, from a piece of sandstone, then pouring molten silver into the resulting mold. The mold was broken open after the silver had solidified, and the piece finished by hand. Although modern history might lead us to believe otherwise, the use of semi-precious stones, such as turquoise, was secondary in Navajo jewelry making.

Baskets

One of the earliest cultures in the Southwest was known as the "basketmakers", which reached its peak in the 14th and 15th centuries. When methods of making pottery were devised, basket making declined in importance. Many of the same designs were continued on the clay, however. The most common materials for baskets made in this area have been corn husks, yucca, devil's claw, and common grass, with the most common shape a broad, shallow form.

Carol Hotchkiss
Registrar

20 Concha Belt, 19th century, silver and leather, 48¾" long. Nine silver pierced and embossed oval conchas with central diamond- and radiating-line motif, scalloped outer edges, mounted on heavy leather. Ceremonial buckle with radiating fan motif on opposite sides.

21 Concha Belt, 19th century, silver and leather, 42½" long. Seven silver oval conchas, embossed, alternating with six silver butterflies, all mounted on heavy leather. Rectangular silver scalloped buckle.

22 Concha Belt, 19th century, silver, leather, and turquoise, 42" long. Seven silver oval conchas, embossed and raised design. Silver buckle with incised design and two small cabacho turquoise stones.

23 Concha Belt, 19th century, silver and leather, 43" long. Seven silver oval conchas with pierced diamond design in center, conchas mounted on heavy leather. Rectangular incised buckle.

24 Bracelet, 19th century, silver and turquoise, 3½" wide. Silver embossed with arrows and geometric designs: one large oval turquoise stone in center.

25 Bracelet, 19th century, silver, 3½" wide. Bar of silver with incised designs.

26 Bracelet, 19th century, silver and turquoise, 3¾" wide. Embossed and engraved silver with seven graduated turquoise stones set in mounts.

27 Squash Blossom Necklace, 19th century, silver, doubled length 13". Silver beads with six squash blossoms and embossed crescent pendant.

28 Squash Blossom Necklace, 19th century, silver, doubled length 13". Silver beads and six squash blossoms with embossed crescent pendant with arrow designs.

29 Necklace, 19th century, silver and turquoise, doubled length 9". Turquoise beads strung with seven silver beads on copper wrapped thread.

30 Arm Plate, 19th century, silver and leather, length of silver 3½". Plate of silver embossed with three circular designs; mounted on leather.

31 Arm Plate, 19th century, silver and leather, silver length 3¾". Plate of silver with central embossed oval and radiating lines. Faded design of a cow on leather backing.

32 Buttons, 19th century, silver, each 4" long. Pair of silver rectangular, embossed buttons from an old Navajo costume.

33 Buckle, late 19th century, silver, diameter 2". In the shape of a flower; pierced designs throughout.

34 Buckle, late 19th century, silver, diameter 3⅛". In the shape of a flower with oval bosses.

35 Buckle, late 19th century, diameter 3½". Pierced and embossed with central stone of turquoise.

36 Buckle, late 19th century, diameter 1½". Pierced designs.

37 Marriage Basket, late 19th century, coil method, 14½" diameter.

38 Bowl, circa 1850, coil method, 12" diameter.

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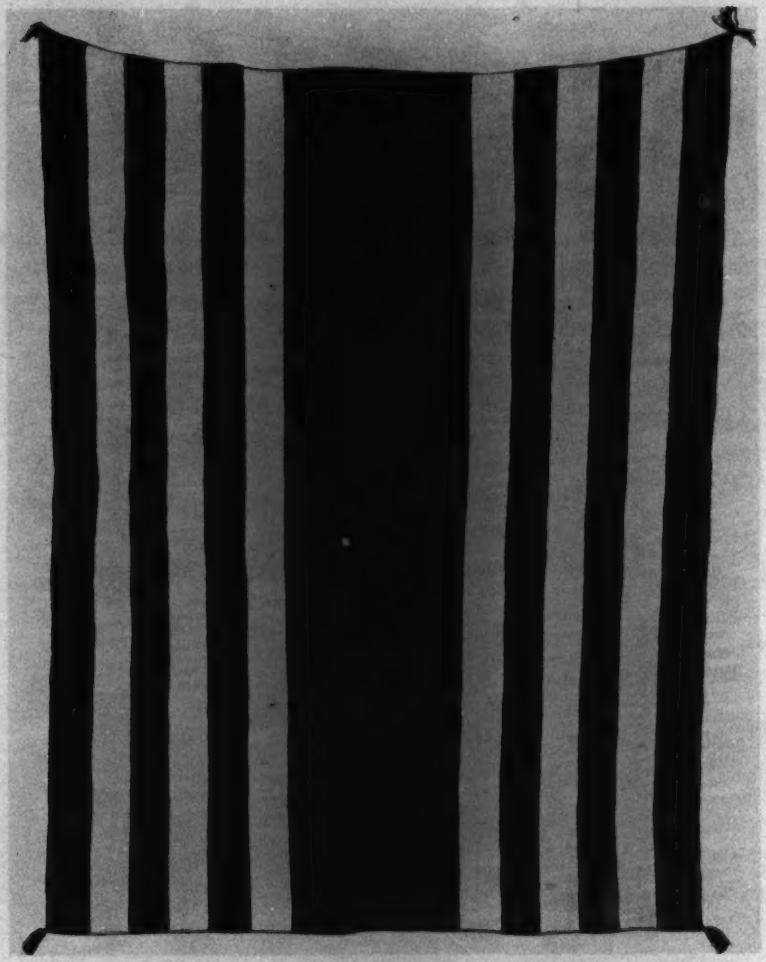

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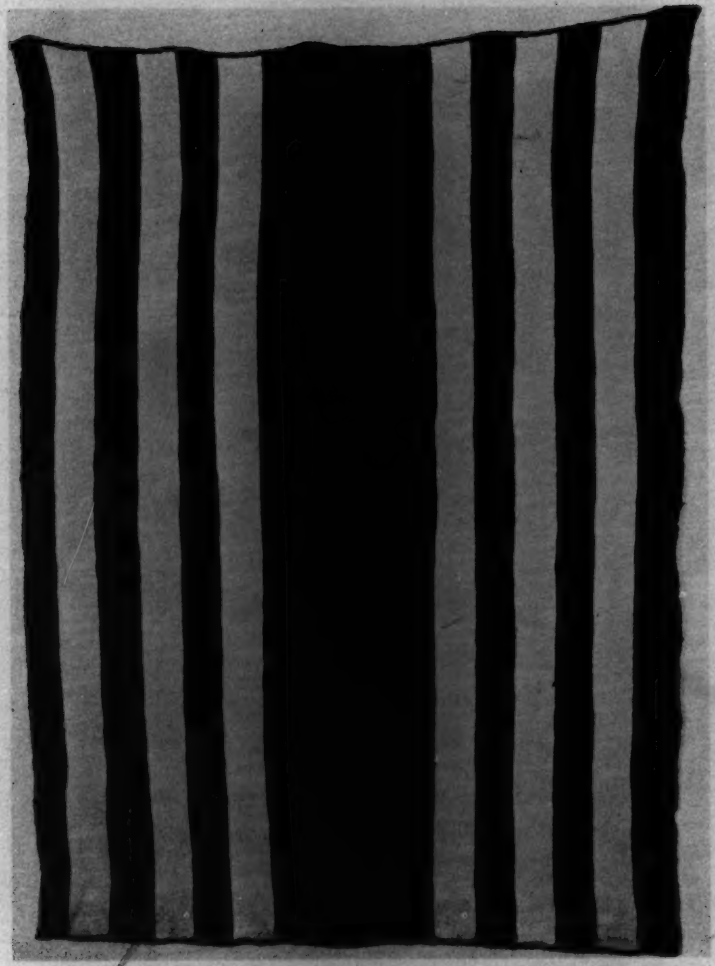

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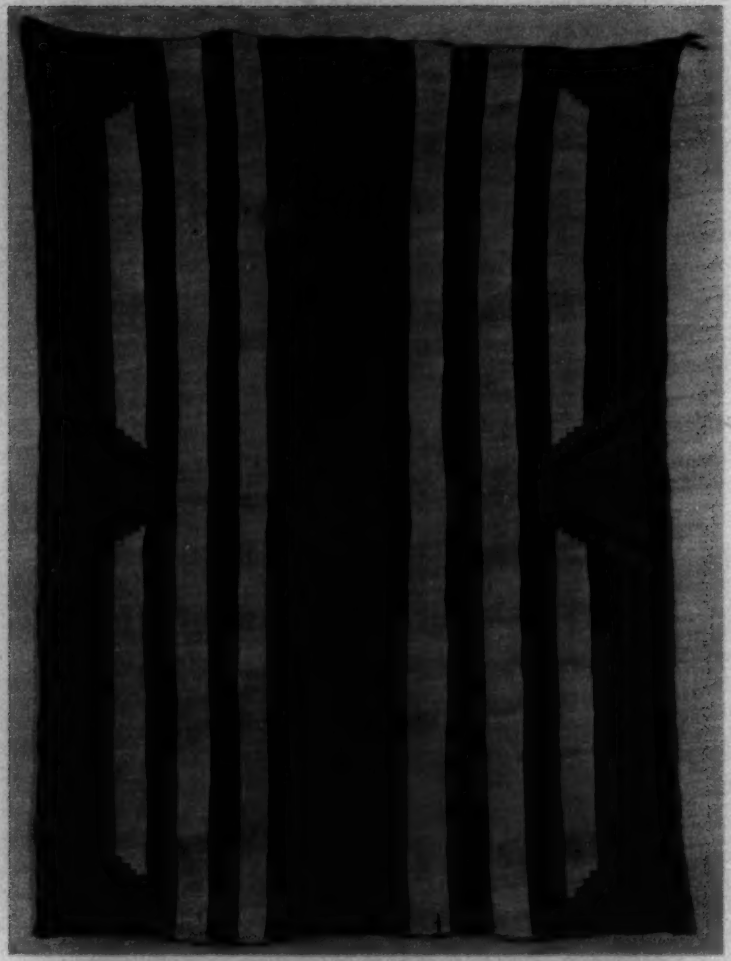

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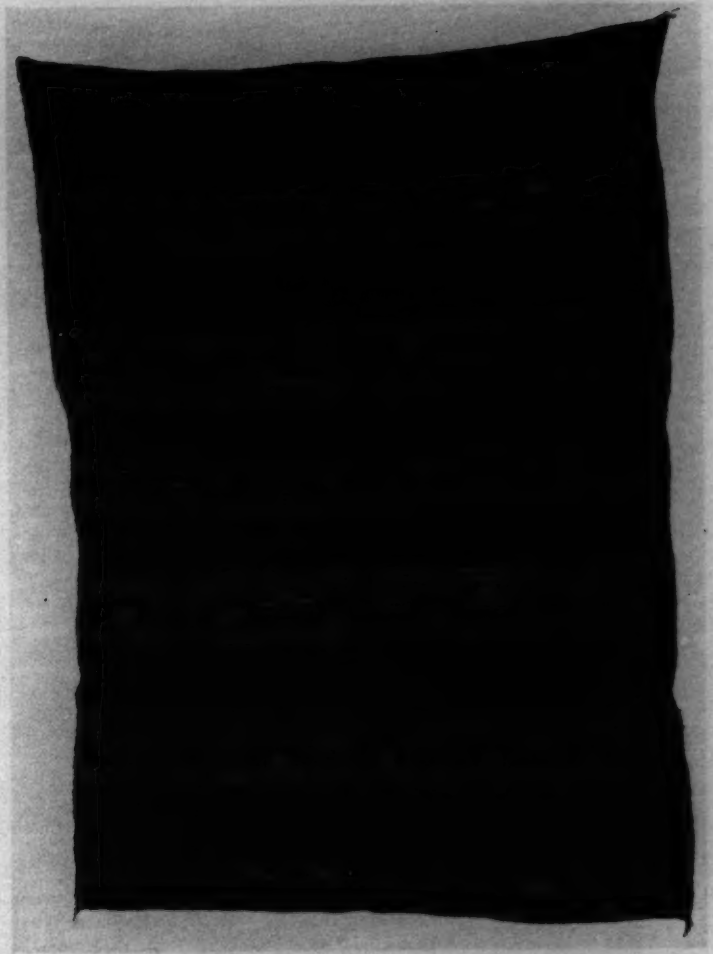

22 Concha Belt, 28 Squash Blossom Necklace

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